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Country review report for Zimbabwe

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Introduction

1. In accordance with the procedures set forth in the programming manual for the review of country cooperation frameworks (CCFs), a review of the CCF for Zimbabwe was held in September-October 1999, including high-level consultative meetings. The present report contains a summary of the findings of the review. For programme performance the findings are organized in the form of summaries, the corresponding recommendations and the action agreed on by UNDP and the Government of Zimbabwe. The full text of the document is available upon request from the Executive Board Secretariat.

I. The national context

2. The country review covers the first CCF between UNDP and Zimbabwe (1997-1999). The programme reflects Zimbabwe's keen interest into using UNDP support in the areas of poverty reduction, development management, and environmental regeneration to support the Government's overall objectives of sustainable human development (SHD), capacity-building and good governance. Within the larger context of national development, the financial contribution of UNDP is catalytic but modest. Strategically, however, UNDP provides important services and makes a distinct contribution to the many complex issues with which the country is faced.

3. Immediately after the first CCF became operational, Zimbabwe plunged into a state of economic crisis, which has curtailed expenditures on basic social services. This situation has been further aggravated by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The worsening social conditions raised the level of poverty and adversely affected overall development. This has made the role of UNDP even more important. UNDP enjoys excellent relations with the host country in its role as a policy broker, advocate and mediator. The review recognized that UNDP is in a good position to continue to deliver quality and effective technical assistance in Zimbabwe through advocacy, aimed at policy reforms and in close consultation with the Government. There is a need for UNDP to continue assisting in transforming the economic, political and social landscape with the objective of supporting national initiatives in the improvement of public administration systems and participatory development planning processes. UNDP will refocus its emphasis within its poverty reduction and development management assistance to address effectively changing and aggravated social and poverty conditions within the country, its main emphasis being advocacy for pro-poor sensitive policies and the creation of an enabling environment for the development of the private sector. Through its advocacy, coordination and brokerage roles, UNDP aims not only to strengthen its optional work relations with the Government and the donors but will sharpen the focus of its interventions and strategically position its support to government policies.

II. The country cooperation framework

4. The current CCF represents a sound and overall effective effort of cooperation between UNDP and Zimbabwe and makes a modest but in many ways strategic contribution to Zimbabwe's development. The programme shows the strong ownership and commitment of the Government of Zimbabwe.

5. There has been no substantial change in the CCF since it was launched. However, because of the prevailing economic and social conditions, greater emphasis has been placed on the provision of assistance to attain macroeconomic stability and on the amelioration of the consequences of the high incidence of AIDS.

6. The emerging importance of governance was correctly anticipated in the CCF, which led to effective cooperation with the Government. The emphasis UNDP placed upon participatory development at the grass-roots level has proven to be most appropriate.

7. According to the review, given the many other pressing problems in Zimbabwe, the choice of environmental regeneration as one of the three areas of concentration, seems inappropriate, although the Government of Zimbabwe does consider the protection of the environment to be of importance.

III. Programme performance

8. The priority areas of the CCF are (a) development management; (b) poverty reduction; (c) environmental regeneration; and (d) the cross-cutting themes that

included governance, gender, and HIV/AIDS. The total resource mobilization target for the CCF of $26.2 million, as shown in the financial summary table annexed to the present report, consisted of $13.7 million in regular resources and $12.5 in other resources.

A. Development management

9. **Findings**. The economic reform measures that were listed in the first CCF, such as reduced expenditure, improved macroeconomic policy, public expenditure review, civil service reform, privatization and decentralization, were either not implemented or only partially implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe during the period under review. The policy environment was therefore unfavourable for the success of many UNDP-funded activities. This disconnect between activities and policy was reinforced by the design of certain projects that emphasized activity-level work (short courses, study tours, equipment) at the expense of involvement in strategic change management. UNDP attempted to compensate for the absence of policy reforms by producing policy research papers and by participating in high-level government retreats at which public policy issues were discussed.

10. **Recommendations**. UNDP should concentrate its interventions on policy matters and projects that emphasize strategic change management and macroeconomic stability. UNDP should intensify its advocacy role in pursuit of higher-quality economic and financial management in the country. It should support projects that are designed to enable civil society to participate meaningfully in the governance of the country, as UNDP has done in initiating a series of discussions by civil society on annual budget of the Government.

11. **Agreed action**. UNDP will support national efforts to integrate poverty reduction strategies into the macro-policy framework through pro-poor advocacy and support to macroeconomic policy research. UNDP will support macroeconomic management, capacity development for strategic policy units in the Government, such as the Office of the President, and society at large, including support to constitutional and governance reforms. UNDP will work with the Government to strengthen the capacity of independent and constitutionally established commissions in elections, human rights, gender and anti-corruption. UNDP governance initiatives in Zimbabwe should continue to focus on encouraging civil society organizations to participate more actively and openly on macro-policy consultation and dialogue through the National Economic Consultative Forum.

B. Poverty reduction

12. **Findings**. The UNDP poverty reduction programme has had an impact on policy reforms through its Poverty Assessment Study Survey (PASS). In identifying the most poverty-stricken areas, this study enabled the Government to focus on the worst-affected districts rather than spread its poverty alleviation activities thinly across the country. The national Zimbabwe Programme for Social and Economic Transformation (ZIMPREST) has included poverty reduction in its own areas of concentration as a result of the findings of PASS. Also, the UNDP-supported Poverty Forum (comprising the Government, donors, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)) has played a significant part in influencing the Government's poverty alleviation policies. Through its community development micro-financing projects, the poverty reduction programme has attempted, with some success, to create jobs in different districts. Although the programme activities in community development achieved some success, they were too dispersed to have a significant impact.

13. **Recommendations**. There is a need for greater concentration of effort by UNDP in this area. UNDP should devote more of its resources to advocating the need for sound financial management, which affects the provision of social services to the poor, and emphasize the imperative of paying special attention to the needy. UNDP should give support to the formulation of social and economic policies designed to create job opportunities and pilot innovative approaches that will cushion the effects of economic instability.

14. **Agreed action**. UNDP collaboration with the Government to implement the national Poverty Alleviation Action Plan (PAAP) began with a series of pilot projects, which has given the impression of dispersion. Since then UNDP efforts and resource mobilization in Zimbabwe in this area has stabilized. UNDP has mobilized $60 million from the World Bank for the PAAP component. UNDP has shifted to

strategic areas in poverty alleviation as noted in chapter II above and is engaging in poverty monitoring and advocacy, the introduction of a national volunteer programme, budgetary discussion and improvement of government delivery systems to support its interventions. UNDP work in Zimbabwe with the entrepreneur development programme (Empretec) and MicroStart has yielded quantifiable achievements in the area of employment and job opportunities and in assisting in building the capacity of local institutions to facilitate outreach of credit institutions. The programme will build the capacity of communities to respond better and more effectively to the challenge of alleviating poverty in their midst. This should also respond to the adverse impact of structural adjustment in assessed sectors.

C. Environment management and regeneration

15. **Findings**. The aim of this programme was to strengthen the overall capacity of Zimbabwe to plan and take action on the guidelines outlined in Agenda 21 and in environmental conventions while enhancing people's livelihoods and contributing to poverty reduction. No impact measurement has been undertaken. UNDP is conducting an evaluation of this programme. The programme has in a modest way enhanced livelihoods and reduced poverty in some areas. There is evidence also that the programme has fostered community cooperation and activity. This has been positive. This area should not be continued as a programme area in the next CCF because it is mainly supply-, donor- and headquarters-driven, not demand-driven. With reduced resources, UNDP work should essentially be demand-driven. The initiatives in this area should not be lost but should be mainstreamed in UNDP programmes as a cross-cutting theme.

16. **Recommendations**. This programme should not be reinstated as an area of concentration. Most of the employment generation projects in this area should be transferred to the poverty reduction programme. Environmental matters should be considered a cross-cutting issue in the future.

17. **Agreed action**. Zimbabwe is premier in Africa in support to global environmental conventions and UNDP will support the Government in its follow-up work to these conventions and will continue donor coordination and resource mobilization to assist in this area. UNDP will also continue to support key projects that link participatory methods to the environment and land as a priority because of its link to poverty. In addition, mainstreaming of environmental considerations as a cross-cutting issue will be effected in all programmes.

D. HIV/AIDS

18. **Findings**. The HIV seropositive rate in Zimbabwe is reported to be the second highest in the world. This has catastrophic implications for all the productive sectors, education and skill base and for public health in general. The Zimbabwe campaign against HIV/AIDS has been given relatively low priority and is significantly donor-driven. The decline in the provision of basic social services has compounded the epidemic. The cumulative effect is more hardship and poverty, mainly among female poor.

19. **Recommendations**. UNDP should exercise a greater advocacy and leadership role with regard to HIV/AIDS and reinforce its in-house expertise on HIV/AIDS strategies through recruitment or special training of its staff. It also should include in its poverty alleviation programmes community-level approaches to HIV/AIDS that are relevant both to the provision of social services and to income generation. HIV/AIDS should be treated as an area of concentration and not a cross-cutting theme as in the last CCF. UNDP has assisted in this area by utilizing its advocacy to ensure that there is a national policy for HIV/AIDS. The United Nations system as a whole should implement joint programmes in this area.

20. **Agreed action**. The significant role of UNDP advocating to fight the harmful development effect of HIV/AIDS will continue. In addition, since there are many donors with an interest in this area, HIV/AIDS has been identified as a key area for United Nations country team joint intervention. HIV/AIDS is treated as a multisectoral problem in Zimbabwe and the various United Nations agencies will provide support in their areas of expertise. UNDP will support coordination efforts and key policy design issues, including leadership. Through advocacy, UNDP intends to influence policy and policy shifts in this area. UNDP will also monitor the impact of AIDS on the economic and social sector, including dissemination of information and education.

IV. UNDP support to the United Nations

21. **Findings**. The UNDP office in Zimbabwe has been most successful in forging partnerships with other organizations of the United Nations country team, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and with bilateral donors and international NGOs. The United Nations country team has formulated an UNDAF paper which seeks to achieve greater integration of United Nations activities in the country while preserving the special characteristics of its various units. This system has significantly enhanced morale and increased awareness by each head of agency of the programmes and activities of his/her colleagues. Systems for improved coordination and for sharing information are established through the creation of the United Nations Inter-Agency Support Unit (UNIASU); to facilitate inter-agency collaboration in programming, advocacy and administrative services. UNDP, through its work on poverty alleviation, gender and advocacy and the National Economic Consultative Forum, has built positive relations with civil society and the World Bank; they participate together in working groups and donor coordination mechanisms.

22. **Recommendations**. UNDP support to the United Nations country team is highly significant and the innovations have cultivated a sense of belonging to the United Nations family. The role of the resident coordinator is recognized. The country team in order to ensure its continued and improved success will investigate the adequacy of resources allocated to their offices for joint advocacy, formulation and impiementation of United Nations policies and initiatives. The country team will also ensure that their rules and regulations are harmonized and do not have an adverse impact on collaboration.

23. **Agreed action**. The design and ownership of UNDAF is now a reality in Zimbabwe and the United Nations country team is consolidating its work in the following manner. It has enhanced accountability by establishing a monitoring and evaluation committee, initiating joint programmes in each of the UNDAF programme theme areas, beginning with a district-level-based project on HIV/AIDS, instituting United Nations/Government retreats to discuss strategies and approaches (two have already been held), and formulating joint advocacy on key policy issues.

Annex

Financial summary table

Country: Zimbabwe
CCF period: 1997-1999
Period covered by the country review: January 1997-August 1999

Regular resources	*Amount assigned for the CCF**	*Amount planned for the period under review*	*Estimated expenditure for the period under review*
	(Thousands of US dollars)		
Estimated IPF carry-over	1 303	1 303	1 303
TRAC 1.1.1 and TRAC 1.1.2 (75% of TRAC 1.1.1)	11 882	8 911	10 132
TRAC 1.1.3	-	100	100
Other resources (TCDC)	-	230	190
Support for policy and programme development/ support for technical services	566	425	630
Subtotal	**13 751**	**10 969**	**12 355**

Other resources	*Amount targeted for the CCF**	*Amount mobilized for the period under review*	*Estimated expenditure for the period under review*
	(Thousands of US dollars)		
Government cost-sharing	1 778	709	630
Third party cost-sharing	2 667	4 761	2 728
Sustainable development funds			
Global Environment Facility	3 556	2 667	2 371
Montreal Protocol	-	173	121
Funds, trust funds and other			
Nordic Trust Fund	3 556	674	599
Japan Trust Fund	444	-	-
UNDP Trust Fund	-	37	33
UNCTAD	-	50	35
UNSO	471	500	350
Other	-	2 207	1 542
Subtotal	**12 472**	**11 778**	**8 409**
Grand total	**26 223**	**22 747**	**20 764**

* Prorated for the period under review.